IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 19 as shown in the following replacement claim set:

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method, comprising:

maintaining identification for a group of decision-making entities in a memory device;

maintaining a setpoint representing a minimum cumulative support required to implement a proposed action;

communicating a query to the plurality of decision-making entities, wherein the query includes a description of the proposed action;

receiving ~~query~~ responses to the query from the plurality of decision-making entities, wherein each response includes an indicator of support for the proposed action;

determining the cumulative support from the query responses received; and

automatically implementing the proposed action if the cumulative support is greater than the setpoint.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising communicating messages to one or more of the decision-making entities.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising communicating messages from one or more of the decision-making entities to at least one different decision-making entity.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the indication of support is of a type selected from qualitative, quantitative, functional or a combination thereof.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of automatically implementing the decision includes transmitting an instruction to one or more trading networks.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

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imposing arbitration among the plurality of decision-making entities if the query responses provide cumulative support less than the minimum setpoint value.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
initiating an intra-group caucus between a plurality of the decision-making entities.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a request from one of the decision-making entities to initiate a query, wherein the request includes the proposed action.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the query is formulated by one of the plurality of decision-making entities and transmitted to a central coordinator for subsequent communication to the plurality of decision-making entities.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the setpoint is established by the decision-making entity that formulates the query.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of implementing the decision comprises transmitting an electronic communication to a third party.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identification of each decision-making entity includes a weighting factor; and wherein the step of determining the cumulative support includes applying the weighting factor against each indicator of support for the decision.

13.   (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising:
sending a communication to each of the plurality of decision-making entities stating the amount of additional support necessary to reach the minimum setpoint.

14.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the query responses include weighting factors or other criteria relevant to the level of support.

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15.   (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

automatically communicating a second query to the plurality of decision-making entities if the additional support necessary to reach the minimum setpoint value is less than an second setpoint.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

querying one of the plurality of decision-making entities for authorization to implement the decision if the query responses provide cumulative support greater than the minimum setpoint.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

obtaining approval or denial to implement the decision.

18.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

communicating the cumulative support to the plurality of decision-making entities;

formulating a second query based on this cumulative support;

receiving responses to the second query from the plurality of decision-making entities, wherein each of the second responses include a revised indication of support;

determining a revised cumulative support for the second query incorporating the revised indications of support; and

implementing the decision if the revided cumulative support is greater than the minimum setpoint.

19.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product including instructions embodied on a computer readable medium, the instructions comprising:

maintaining instructions for maintaining identification for a group of decision-making entities in a memory device;

maintaining instructions for maintaining a setpoint representing a minimum cumulative support required to implement a proposed action;

communicating instructions for communicating a query to the plurality of decision-making entities, wherein the query includes a description of the proposed action;

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receiving instructions for receiving ~~query~~ responses to the query from the plurality of decision-making entities, wherein each response includes an indicator of support for the proposed action;

determining instructions for determining the cumulative support from the query responses received; and

implementing instructions for automatically implementing the decision if the cumulative support is greater than the setpoint.

20. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising communicating instructions for communicating messages to one or more of the decision-making entities.

21. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising communicating instructions for communicating messages from one or more of the decision-making entities to at least one different decision-making entity.

22. . (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising instructions for formulating a decision of a type selected from qualitative, quantitative functional or a combination of decisions thereof.

23. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the implementing instructions include transmitting instruction for transmitting an instruction to one or more trading networks.

24. (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:

instructions imposing arbitration among the plurality of decision-making entities if the query responses provide cumulative support less than the minimum setpoint.

25. (Original) The of claim 19, further comprising

caucusing instructions for initiating an intra-group caucus between a plurality of the decision-making entities.

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26.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:
    initiating instructions for allowing one of the decision-making entity to initiate a query.

27.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 26, further comprising:
    identifying instructions for identifying a query that is formulated by one of the plurality of decision-making entities; and
    transmitting instructions for transmitting the query to the plurality of decision-making entities.

28.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 27, further comprising:
    identifying instructions for identifying a setpoint established by the decision-making entity that formulated the query.

29.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, wherein implementing instructions for implementing the decision comprise transmitting instructions for transmitting an electronic communication to a third party.

30.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:
    maintaining instructions for maintaining a weighting factor for each of the decision-making entities; and
applying instructions for applying the weighting factor for each of the decision-making entities against the indication of support received from the corresponding decision-making entity.

31.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 24, further comprising:
    transmitting instructions for transmitting the amount of additional support necessary to reach the minimum setpoint value to each of the plurality of decision-making entities.

32.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the indication of support provides a graduated level of support.

33.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 31, further comprising:

transmitting instructions for automatically communicating a second query to the plurality of decision-making entities if the additional support necessary to reach the minimum setpoint is less than an second setpoint.

34.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:

generating instructions for generating a query to one of the plurality of decision-making entities for authorization to implement the decision if the query responses provide cumulative support greater than the minimum setpoint.

35.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:

transmitting instructions for communicating the cumulative response to the plurality of decision-making entities;

transmitting instructions for formulating a second query based on this cumulative response;

transmitting instructions for communicating second responses from the plurality of decision-making entities, wherein the second responses comprise revised weighting factors;

transmitting instructions for determining the cumulative response to the second query incorporating the revised weighting factors;

implementing instructions for implementing the decision if the second query responses provide cumulative support greater than the minimum setpoint value.

36.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein one or more of the plurality of decision-making entities communicates through a personal digital assistant.

37.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications occur over a wireless network.

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38.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications utilize instant messaging.

39.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a collaboration manager to interface between decision-making entities having different computer platforms or applications.

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